

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1. (Cancelled).

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the nitrogen oxide (NO_x) is selected from the group consisting of nitrogen monoxide (NO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), dinitrogen tetroxide (N_2O_4) and mixtures thereof.

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the nitrogen oxide (NO_x) is introduced until the etching liquid is saturated with the nitrogen oxide.

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) ~~The process as claimed in claim 1~~ A process for wet-chemical treatment of silicon using an etching liquid that contains water, nitric acid and hydrofluoric acid, the process comprising:

activating the etching liquid by introducing nitrogen oxide (NO_x) into the etching liquid before being used for the wet-chemical treatment of silicon,

wherein the nitrogen oxide (NO_x) is generated during a wet-chemical treatment of silicon with an etching liquid in a first vessel, the etching liquid containing water, nitric acid and hydrofluoric acid, and wherein the nitrogen oxide (NO_x) that is formed is discharged from the first vessel and introduced into a second vessel that holds fresh etching liquid also containing water, nitric acid and hydrofluoric acid, in order to activate the fresh etching liquid.

Claim 5. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the nitrogen oxides (NO_x) which are formed during the wet-chemical treatment are extracted from the first vessel by a pump and are pumped into the second vessel.

Claim 6. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the nitrogen oxides (NO_x) which are discharged from the first vessel are fed into a circuit through which the fresh etching liquid is circulated by means of a pump.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the wet-chemical treatment relates to single-crystalline silicon wafers.

Claims 8 - 10. (Cancelled).